

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8274

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0707

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: TALK WITH SAUVAGNARGUES ON LEBANON

REF: SECTO 01037

1. IN ANY DISCUSSION WITH SAUVAGNARGUES WE HOPE POINT CAN BE DWELT ON THAT NOTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO DETRACT FROM POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESS OF CURRENT SYRIAN INITIATIVE. THIS CONTINUES TO REPRESENT BEST CHANCE FOR POLITICAL SETTLEMENT TO AVOID MUCH MORE SERIOUS MILITARY ESCALATION HER. HAPPY TO SEE QUAI'S SERVANT ALSO FEELS THIS WAY (PARIS 1979) BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHAT STEPS FRENCH HAVE TAKEN FOLLOWING PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT BY SAUVAGNARGUES TO CLARIFY THIS POINT PUBLICLY AND ALSO TO THE LEBANESE AND SYRIAN GOVERNMENTS. FRANGIE AND ASAD HAVE AN UPHILL BATTLE AGAINST EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES AND VIEW OF NEW FRENCH INITIATIVE JUST OVER HORIZON MIGHT ONLY COMPLICATE PHEIR LIVES.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, OF COURSE, READINESS OF FRENCH TO UNDERTAKE SUCH INITIATIVE WILL HELP STEADY LEBANESE CHRISTIANS AGAINST PARTITION OR OTHER DESPERATE MEASURES SHOULD FRANGIE-ASAD AGREEMENT FALL THROUGH.
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